Agriculture in Ottawa-Carleton

An Analysis of the 1986 Census of Agriculture

Regional Municipality of Ottawa - Carleton
Planning Department
Policy & Program Division
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Highlights

Agriculture in Ottawa-Carleton - 1986

- there were 1,674 census farms in Ottawa-Carleton occupying a total area of 128,433 hectares or 48.6% of the total land area of the Region
- the total value of agricultural products sold in Ottawa-Carleton in 1985 was more than $92 million ($55,000 per farm)
- cattle operations (36.1%) and dairy farms (26.7%) make up more than 62% of farms with sales of $2,500 or more
- 46% of census farms reported sales of less than $10,000 and 47% of farmers reported off farm work
- only 10.5% of farmers in Ottawa-Carleton are under 35 years of age compared to Ontario where 15.8% of farmers are under 35
- 89.4% of census farms are less than 162 hectares in size; the average farm size is 76.7 hectares

Changes in Ottawa-Carleton 1976-1986

- the number of census farms has decreased by 15.7%
- the amount of improved farm land has declined by 9.4%
- the number of dairy farms has declined by more than one third
- dairy operations now rank second in importance behind cattle operations - a reversal of the situation in 1976
- miscellaneous specialty crops, fruit and vegetable operations have increased at a faster rate than in the rest of the Province.

I - INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the 1986 Census of Agriculture as they relate to the Ottawa-Carleton region. The Census of Agriculture provides an opportunity to describe the agricultural industry in the Region and to compare its performance to that of Eastern Ontario and the entire Province of Ontario. It is also an opportunity to see how agriculture has changed in Ottawa-Carleton since 1976 as measured by the Census of Agriculture.

This is the first time that the Planning Department has produced a report to describe the Census of Agriculture. It is hoped that this report will provide useful insights into the agricultural industry in Ottawa-Carleton.

Census of Agriculture

I) General

The 1986 Census of Agriculture was collected with the 1986 Census of Population. Each farm operator was asked to complete an agriculture questionnaire. The Census of Agriculture provides statistics on crops, livestock, farm size, age of farmers and many other variables that are of interest to the public and the private sector.

II) Definitions

Census Farm:

The Census of Agriculture describes a census farm as a farm producing $250 or more a year in sales. The farm area includes all land operated by the farmer regardless of where the land is geographically located.

Improved Farm Land:

Improved farm land includes land under crops, improved pasture, summer fallow, farm yards and greenhouses.

Improvements include cultivation, drainage, irrigation, fertilization, seeding or spraying for brush or weed control.

Eastern Ontario

In the census, Eastern Ontario includes the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton and the counties of Frontenac, Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, Lennox and Addington, Prescott Russell, Renfrew, Stormont Dundas and Glengarry.

III) Interpretation of the Data

The Census of Agriculture defines a census farm as any operation that produces $250 or more a year in sales. In 1986 almost half (46%) of farms listed in the census reported sales of less than $10,000. This makes interpretation of the results difficult because smaller less significant operations are grouped with large agricultural operations. Caution should be used when interpreting data dealing with the number of farms engaged in a certain activity.

The same problem occurs when one looks at the data for agricultural land. Data exists for the number of census farms and the total area occupied by farms but one does not know the location, soil classification or agricultural significance of these lands. The Regional Official Plan, adopted by Council on July 13, 1988, designates approximately 118,535 hectares of land as "Agricultural Resource Area" while the total area of farms reported in the census is 128,433 hectares.

II - PROFILE OF AGRICULTURE IN OTTAWA-CARLETON - 1986

General

In 1986 there were 1,674 census farms in Ottawa-Carleton. Forty- five percent of these farms are located in Osgoode and West Carleton Townships.

The total area of these farms was 128,433 hectares or 48.6% of the total land area of Ottawa-Carleton.

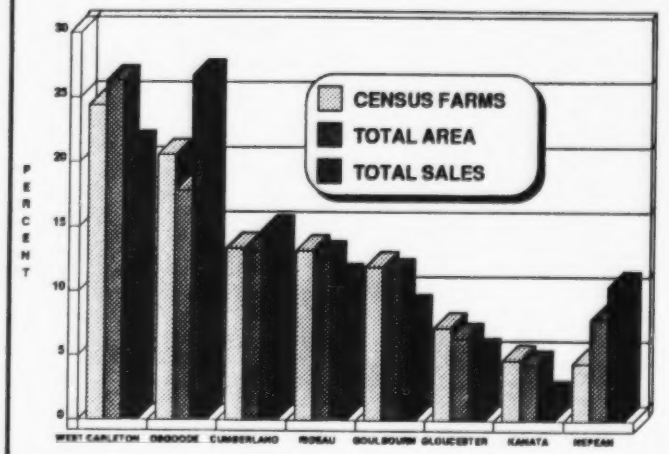
The total value of agricultural products sold in Ottawa-Carleton in 1985 was more than $92 million ($55,000 per farm).

The average size of farm in Ottawa-Carleton is 76.7 hectares.

Osgoode and West Carleton Townships had 48% of the total farm sales in the Region. West Carleton has the most census farms and the largest farm area, but Osgoode is the leader in total sales (see Figure 1). Although Nepean has the fewest census farms (4.5%) it accounts for more than 10% of total sales in the Region. Average sales per farm in Nepean were $128,000 compared to the Regional average of $55,000. The average sales per farm in Osgoode was also higher than the Regional average (see Table 1).

Figure 1

CENSUS FARMS IN OTTAWA CARLETON - 1986



* Farms with sales of $250 or more

Table 1

CENSUS FARMS IN OTTAWA-CARLETON - 1986

	Census Farms	Total Area (hectares)	Average Size (hectares)	Total Sales ($)	Average Sales ($)
Cumberland	224	16,862	75.3	13,595,970	60,696
Gloucester	121	8,244	68.1	4,853,391	40,111
Goulbourn	200	14,655	73.3	7,947,199	39,736
Kanata	79	5,547	70.2	1,822,158	23,065
Nepean	75	10,125	135.0	9,650,800	128,677
Osgoode	345	22,874	66.3	24,668,987	71,504
Rideau	221	16,399	74.2	10,140,505	45,885
West Carleton	409	33,722	82.4	19,591,262	47,900
Total RMOC	**1,674**	**128,433**	**76.7**	**92,727,847**	**55,393**

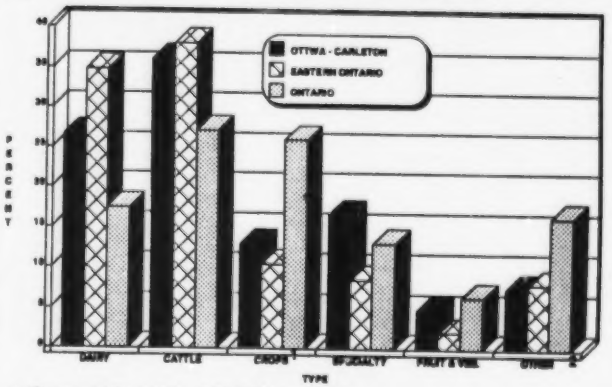
Type of Operation

In Ottawa-Carleton, livestock operations comprised of cattle (36.1%) and dairy farms (26.7%) make up more than 62% of all farms with sales of more than $2,500. Fruit, vegetables and miscellaneous specialty crops* (16.7%) are also important in Ottawa-Carleton, probably due to the proximity of a large urban market.

In Eastern Ontario cattle and dairy operations make up more than 72% of farm operations. Fruit and vegetables and miscellaneous specialty crops are less important (8.6% of farms).

In the Province of Ontario livestock operations, especially dairy, make up a smaller percentage of farms. Small grains and field crops (26.2% of farms) are more predominant in Ontario than in Ottawa- Carleton or Eastern Ontario.

Figure 2 TYPE OF FARMING OPERATION* - 1986



* Farms with sales of $2,500 or more
1 Wheat
Small grains
Field crops
2 Hogs
Poultry
Livestock Combination
Other Combination

Table 2

TYPE OF FARMING OPERATION - 1986

Type		Ottawa-Carleton 1986	Ottawa-Carleton %	Eastern Ontario 1986	Eastern Ontario %	Ontario 1986	Ontario %
Dairy		366	26.7%	3,122	34.8%	11,028	17.4%
Cattle		495	36.1%	3,411	38.0%	17,160	27.1%
Crops	Wheat	14	1.0%	63	0.7%	733	1.2%
	Small Grains	158	11.5%	823	9.2%	13,693	21.6%
	Field Crops	6	0.4%	50	0.6%	1,988	3.1%
Misc Specialty*		162	11.8%	586	6.5%	4,203	6.6%
Fruit & Vegetables		67	4.9%	186	2.1%	4,089	6.5%
Other	Hogs	21	1.5%	208	2.3%	4,840	7.7%
	Poultry	18	1.3%	132	1.5%	1,643	2.6%
	Livestock Combination	12	0.9%	91	1.0%	1,653	2.6%
	Other Combination	53	3.9%	298	3.3%	2,223	3.5%
Total		**1,372**	**100%**	**8,970**	**100%**	**63,253**	**100%**

*** Includes: nurseries, greenhouses, mushroom farms, sheep and horse operations**

Farms Classified by Sales Class

Of the 1,674 census farms in Ottawa-Carleton, 777 or 46% reported sales of less than $10,000. 800 farmers (47%) reported working off the farm. This suggests that many farms with sales of less than $10,000 are hobby farms or are operated by part-time farmers.

While nearly 50% of farms in Ottawa-Carleton and Eastern Ontario have incomes less than $10,000, only one-third of Ontario farms fit into this category.

Ontario as a whole has a higher proportion of farms in the $50,000 or over sales class.

Figure 3

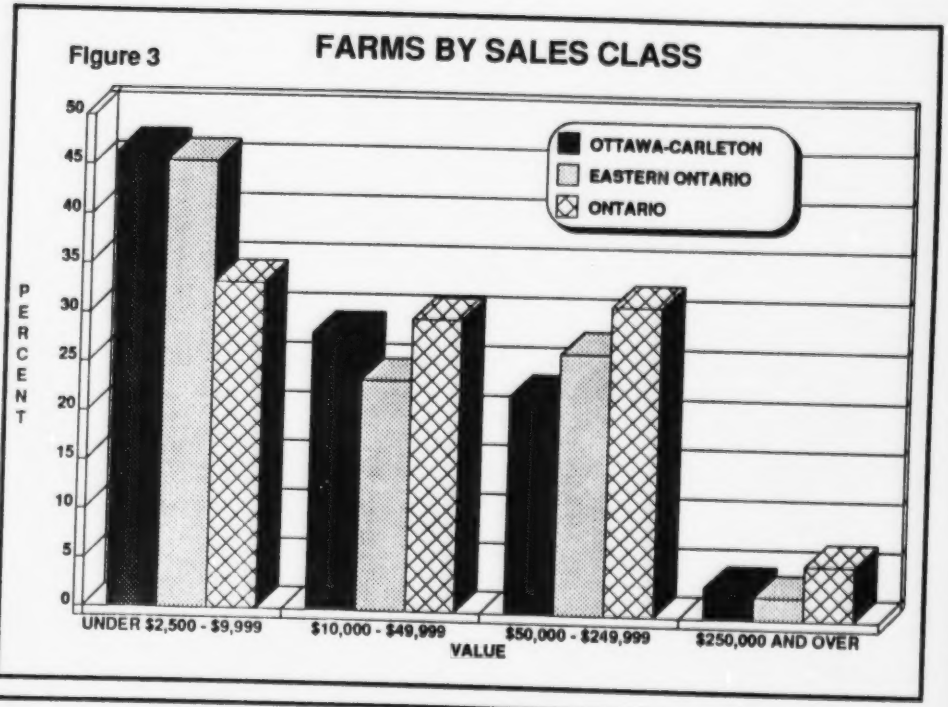


Table 3

FARMS BY SALES CLASS

Value of Agricultural Products Sold	Ottawa-Carleton Farms	Ottawa-Carleton %	Eastern Ontario Farms	Eastern Ontario %	Ontario Farms	Ontario %
Under $2,500	302	18.0%	2,166	19.5%	9,460	13.0%
$2,500-4,999	189	11.3%	1,322	11.9%	5,868	8.1%
$5,000-9,999	286	17.1%	1,801	16.2%	8,842	12.2%
$10,000-24,999	295	17.6%	1,666	15.0%	12,620	17.4%
$25,000-49,999	177	10.6%	956	8.6%	9,034	12.4%
$50,000-99,999	163	9.7%	1,359	12.2%	10,453	14.4%
$100,000-249,999	208	12.4%	1,602	14.4%	12,358	17.0%
$250,000-499,999	37	2.2%	202	1.8%	2,949	4.1%
$500,000 and Over	17	1.0%	62	0.6%	1,129	1.6%
Total	**1,674**	**100%**	**11,136**	**100%**	**72,713**	**100%**

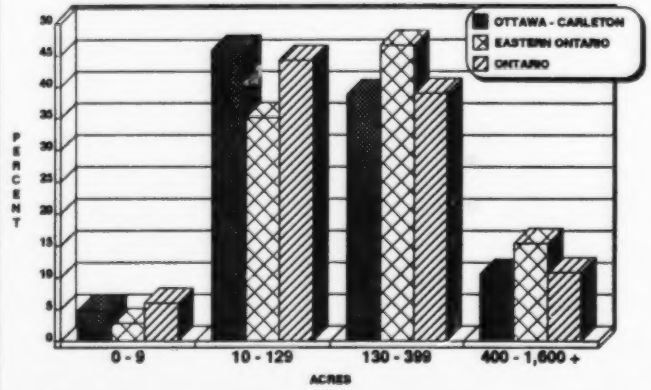
Size of Farms

In Ottawa-Carleton 89.4% of census farms are less than 162 hectares (400 acres) in size. In Eastern Ontario there is a higher proportion of farms larger than 52 hectares (129 acres).

Note: Table 4 reports the farm size intervals in acres because the data is provided by the Census of Agriculture only in acres. It is not possible to convert the farm size intervals into hectares without altering the content of the table.

Figure 4

SIZE OF CENSUS FARMS* 1986



* Farms reporting sales of $250 or more

Table 4

SIZE OF CENSUS FARMS 1986

	Ottawa-Carleton		Eastern Ontario		Ontario	
Acres	**Farms**	**%**	**Farms**	**%**	**Farms**	**%**
0-3	27	1.6%	138	1.2%	1,638	2.3%
3-9	54	3.2%	186	1.7%	2,752	3.8%
10-69	364	21.7%	1,452	13.0%	14,684	20.2%
70-129	403	24.1%	2,465	22.1%	17,406	23.9%
130-179	205	12.2%	1,293	11.6%	8,799	12.1%
180-239	193	11.5%	1,647	14.8%	8,632	11.9%
240-399	251	15.0%	2,243	20.1%	10,872	15.0%
400-559	95	5.7%	936	8.4%	4,140	5.7%
560-759	42	2.5%	441	4.0%	1,974	2.7%
760-1,119	27	1.6%	234	2.1%	1,206	1.7%
1,120-1,599	6	0.4%	80	0.7%	414	0.6%
1,600+	7	0.4%	21	0.2%	196	0.3%
Total	**1,674**	**100%**	**11,136**	**100%**	**72,713**	**100%**

Age of Farmers

More than 50% of farmers in Ottawa-Carleton are 50 years old or more. Ottawa-Carleton has a slightly higher proportion of farmers aged 65 years or more, compared to the Province of Ontario. Only 10.5% of farmers in Ottawa-Carleton are under 35 years of age. This is a lower proportion than in Eastern Ontario (12.6%) or Ontario (15.8%).

Figure 5

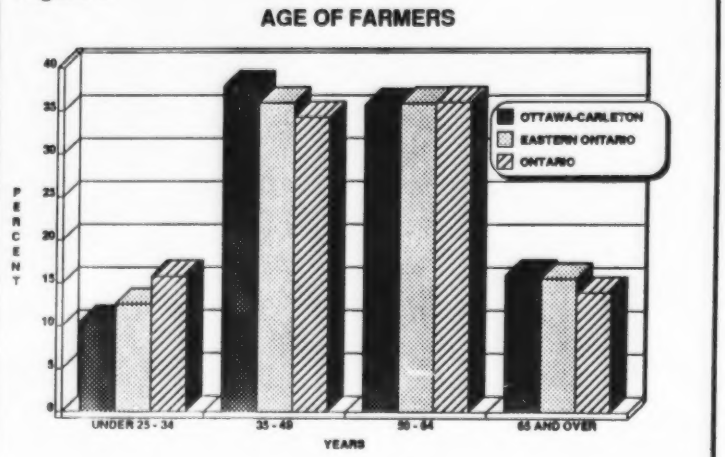


Table 5

AGE OF FARMERS

	Ottawa-Carleton		Eastern Ontario		Ontario	
Years	**Farmers**	**%**	**Farmers**	**%**	**Farmers**	**%**
Under 25	15	0.9%	107	1.0%	1,149	1.6%
25-29	50	3.0%	463	4.2%	4,034	5.5%
30-34	111	6.6%	831	7.5%	6,300	8.7%
35-39	184	11.0%	1,224	11.0%	7,631	10.5%
40-44	237	14.2%	1,439	12.9%	8,746	12.0%
45-49	213	12.7%	1,340	12.0%	8,531	11.7%
50-54	229	13.7%	1,374	12.3%	9,021	12.4%
55-59	205	12.2%	1,421	12.8%	9,386	12.9%
60-64	164	9.8%	1,205	10.8%	7,770	10.7%
65+	266	15.9%	1,732	15.6%	10,145	14.0%
Total	**1,674**	**100%**	**11,136**	**100%**	**72,713**	**100%**

III - Changes in Agriculture in Ottawa-Carleton 1976-1986

General

In looking at the changes in agriculture in the Region over the last 10 years (1976-1986) it is interesting to note that from 1976-1981 the number of farms and hectares of improved farm land increased however since 1981 there has been a dramatic decline in the number of farm operations.

Number of Farms

In the last decade, the number of census farms in Ottawa-Carleton has decreased by 15.7% (312 farms). Many of the farms that have ceased operation though were small operations with less than $2,500 a year in farm sales. The number of farms producing $2,500 or more actually increased by 2.9% (39 farms) over the same period. It should be noted however that inflation has reduced the value of the dollar significantly since 1976 and $2,500 was worth more in 1976 than it was in 1986.

There was a similar trend in Eastern Ontario. Census farms decreased by 22.4% but farms producing $2,500 or more declined by only 7.2%.

In Ontario census farms decreased 18.1% and farms producing $2,500 or more declined by 6.5%.

Table 6

NUMBER OF CENSUS FARMS 1976-1986

TOTAL CENSUS FARMS

				% Diff
	1976	**1981**	**1986**	**1976-1986**
Cumberland	272	273	224	-17.6%
Gloucester	146	156	121	-17.1%
Goulbourn	231	242	200	-13.4%
Kanata	85	87	79	-7.1%
Nepean	100	101	75	-25.0%
Osgoode	376	388	345	-8.2%
Rideau	283	271	221	-21.9%
West Carleton	493	470	409	-17.0%
Total RMOC	**1,986**	**2,002**	**1,674**	**-15.7%**
East Ontario	14,352	12,905	11,136	-22.4%
Total Ontario	**88,801**	**82,448**	**72,713**	**-18.1%**

Improved Farm Land

Between 1976 and 1986 the amount of improved farm land decreased in Ottawa-Carleton by 9.4% or 9,609 hectares. Ontario experienced a similar decrease (8.6%) but Eastern Ontario had a greater loss of improved farm land (18.7%).

Nepean, Rideau, West Carleton and Cumberland had the largest loss of improved farm land. It is not possible to determine from the census whether this loss of improved farm land occurred on prime agricultural lands or on poorer marginal soils.

Table 7

IMPROVED LAND (HECTARES)

	1976	1981	1986	% Diff 1976-1986
Cumberland	14,473	16,046	12,883	-11.0%
Gloucester	6,544	7,717	6,703	2.4%
Goulbourn	10,035	11,319	9,853	-1.8%
Kanata	2,910	4,351	3,080	5.9%
Nepean	10,069	9,915	8,553	-15.0%
Osgoode	19,202	19,873	18,087	-5.8%
Rideau	14,383	13,577	11,863	-17.5%
West Carleton	24,609	25,540	21,587	-12.3%
Total RMOC	**102,222**	**108,338**	**92,613**	**-9.4%**
East Ontario	735,356	726,251	619,496	-18.7%
Total Ontario	**4,479,604**	**4,518,552**	**4,095,148**	**-8.6%**

Type of Operation

In 1976, 43.7% of farms in Ottawa-Carleton with sales of $2,500 or more were dairy farms. The absolute number of dairy farms has declined dramatically in the last ten years (by 37.2%) and now only 26.7% of farms in Ottawa-Carleton are dairy farms. Dairy operations also declined significantly in Eastern Ontario (37.5%) and the Province (29.4%).

The number of cattle operations have increased by 14.8% in Ottawa-Carleton since 1976 and they now make up the largest farm sector in Ottawa-Carleton, accounting for over 36% of farms with sales of $2,500 or more. Eastern Ontario also experienced an increase in the number of cattle operations. Cattle operations make up the highest proportion of farms in the Region and throughout Ontario.

Miscellaneous specialty crops, and fruit and vegetable operations make up 16.7% of all farm operations in Ottawa-Carleton. In 1976 they accounted for only 8% of all farm operations. Miscellaneous specialty crops have increased by more than 100% since 1976. Elsewhere in the Province miscellaneous specialty, fruit and vegetable operations have increased at a slower rate.

Wheat, small grains and field crops account for 13% of farming operations in Ottawa-Carleton, up 5% from 1976.

Figure 6

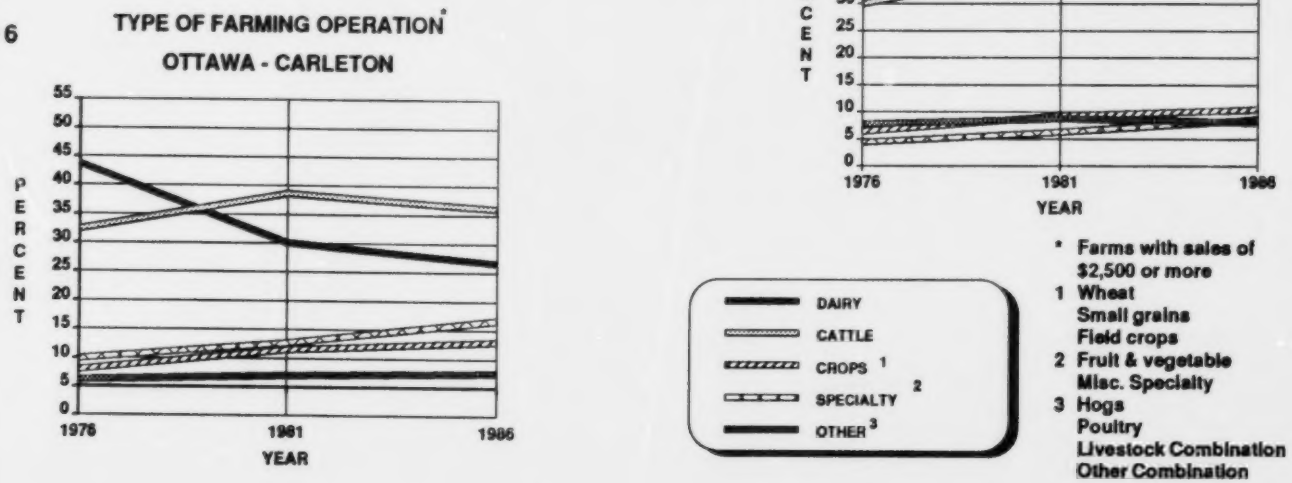


Table 8

TYPE OF FARMING OPERATION*

OTTAWA-CARLETON

Type		1976	%	1981	%	1986	%
Dairy		583	43.7%	448	30.1%	366	26.7%
Cattle		431	32.3%	575	38.6%	495	36.1%
Crops	Wheat	3	0.2%	3	0.2%	14	1.0%
	Small Grains	100	7.5%	134	9.0%	158	11.5%
	Field Crops	3	0.2%	34	2.3%	6	0.4%
Specialty	Misc Specialty	76	5.7%	130	8.7%	162	11.8%
	Fruit & Vegetables	55	4.1%	59	4.0%	67	4.9%
Other	Hogs	26	2.0%	28	1.9%	21	1.5%
	Poultry	15	1.1%	25	1.7%	18	1.3%
	Livestock Combination	17	1.3%	33	2.2%	12	0.9%
	Other Combination	24	1.8%	19	1.3%	53	3.9%
Total		1,333	100%	1,488	100%	1,372	100%

* Farms with sales of $2,500 or more

Table 9

TYPE OF FARMING OPERATION*

EASTERN ONTARIO

Type		1976	%	1981	%	1986	%
Dairy		4,998	51.7%	3,766	38.8%	3,122	34.8%
Cattle		2,902	30.0%	3,578	36.9%	3,411	38.0%
Crops	Wheat	19	0.2%	27	0.3%	63	0.7%
	Small Grains	565	5.8%	718	7.4%	823	9.2%
	Field Crops	32	0.3%	157	1.6%	50	0.6%
Specialty	Misc Specialty	280	2.9%	454	4.7%	586	6.5%
	Fruit & Vegetables	144	1.5%	156	1.6%	186	2.1%
Other	Hogs	199	2.1%	326	3.4%	208	2.3%
	Poultry	134	1.4%	200	2.1%	132	1.5%
	Livestock Combination	179	1.9%	216	2.2%	91	1.0%
	Other Combination	214	2.2%	110	1.1%	298	3.3%
Total		9,666	100%	9,708	100%	8,970	100%

* Farms with sales of $2,500 or more

Table 10

TYPE OF FARMING OPERATION*

ONTARIO

Type		1976	%	1981	%	1986	%
Dairy		15,617	23.1%	12,841	18.6%	11,028	17.4%
Cattle		18,343	27.1%	19,567	28.4%	17,160	27.1%
Crops	Wheat	975	1.4%	692	1.0%	733	1.2%
	Small Grains	13,443	19.9%	14 016	20.3%	13,693	21.6%
	Field Crops	1,951	2.9%	3,353	4.9%	1,988	3.1%
Specialty	Misc Specialty	2,437	3.6%	3,768	5.5%	4,203	6.6%
	Fruit & Vegetables	3,595	5.3%	4,335	6.3%	4,089	6.5%
Other	Hogs	4,461	6.6%	4,984	7.2%	4,840	7.7%
	Poultry	1,655	2.4%	1,886	2.7%	1,643	2.6%
	Livestock Combination	3,658	5.4%	2,406	3.5%	1,653	2.6%
	Other Combination	1,478	2.2%	1,112	1.6%	2,223	3.5%
Total		**67,613**	**100%**	**68,960**	**100%**	**63,253**	**100%**

*** Farms with sales of $2,500 or more**